



RURAL ADVOCATE

FALL 2004



2004 Arkansas Rural Development Conference a Great Success

We would like to thank everyone who attended the 2004 Arkansas Rural Development Conference May 26-28 at the Inn of the Ozarks & Convention Center in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. We had a fantastic turnout of over 500 attendees including 65 legislators, many local officials, fire chiefs, and community activists. Everyone came together to learn about issues effecting rural communities. As more than 82% of Arkansans live in rural areas, these issues are vital to the quality of life in Arkansas.

Throughout the conference, attendees were invited to meet with other involved Arkansans, attend panel discus-

sions, and view exhibits. Speakers included Congressman Marion Berry, Robert Martinez and Lt. Governor Win Rockefeller.

Darla Verkamp of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission moderated a talk about Employment and Youth Opportunities in Rural Arkansas. Verkamp and panelists informed guests about resources that identify, facilitate, and actively support youth in rural communities. Through programs such as the Youth Opportunity Grants, young people are able to gain access to a wide range of employment, training, educational and supportive services.

ARDC Sam E. Angel II led a session on Rural Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services. The program focused on starting fire departments and emergency medical teams. Experienced panelists shared information on where to obtain funding, how to train personnel and volunteers, what equipment to use, and much more. Participants were welcome to ask any questions about the process and receive answers from Arkansas' experts.

The Political Roundtable Conference was a high point for attendees. Led by David Sanders of the Arkansas

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Arkansas Rural Development Commission

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Vice-Chair
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Judy Brown
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Stuttgart

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Larry Teague
Nashville

Darla Verkamp
Charleston

Arnell Washington
Dumas

From ARDC Chair and DRS Director

Firefighters risk their lives to protect our communities, yet often function on shoestring budgets. We would like to tell you about some resources for rural fire stations to acquire additional funds.

The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company has introduced the Fireman's Fund Heritage Program. This program is in its first year and awards fire departments grants for equipment, fire prevention tools, and training. The Fireman's Fund Heritage awards up to \$10 million annually to fire departments and for fire and burn prevention education across the United States.

TUMS is working through the First Responder Institute to award fire stations grants for firefighting equipment. The grant is worth a maximum of \$2,500 per department, requires matching funds, and is awarded quarterly. Rural departments that do not have a tax base support will have first priority.

Firefighters are vital to our communities, and we appreciate all that they do for us. We at the Arkansas Department of Rural Services will do everything we can to promote funding programs for Arkansas' firefighters. Please contact our office for further information about either of these grant programs.



Cindy Kauffman
ARDC Chair



Bruce Campbell
DRS Director



Conference (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

News Bureau, a group of Arkansas state legislators covered hot topics such as the presidential election, the U.S. Senate race, and education reform and its effect on political races, just to name a few.

Of course what is the Rural Development Conference without the famous Rural Services Karaoke? This trademark event is always entertaining, and this year was no exception. Attendees got to show their stuff on the mike and enjoy visiting and dancing.

The 2004 conference was a terrific success, and we are already gearing up for next year. It is a pleasure to serve rural Arkansans and stress important issues affecting rural areas. We appreciate your participation and look forward to seeing you again in 2005!



2004 Arkansas Rural Development Conference

Opportunities for Rural Communities

- Community Centers

The USDA's Community Programs offer grants to build or renovate essential community facilities in unincorporated rural areas with up to 20,000 in population. Communities with low populations and incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants. Grants are available to public groups, non-profit corporations and tribal governments. Funding can be used for necessary projects ranging from health clinics, schools, day cares, and road improvements to sidewalks, sprinkler systems and bridges. Contact the USDA for detailed information by calling 501-301-3250 or visiting www.rurdev.usda.gov/ar.

- Small and Emerging Businesses

The Rural Business-Cooperative Service offers grants to public bodies, private non-profit corporations, and federally-recognized Indian tribal groups. Acting under the Rural Business Enterprise Grants Program, the RBS funds and facilitates the development of small and emerging private business enterprises. Groups may use the grant to acquire technical assistance, purchase equipment and machinery to lease to a small and emerging business, create a revolving loan fund for the business, or

construct a building to house the enterprise. The business must be located in a city or town with under 50,000 inhabitants, and it may not be located near a town with over 50,000 in population. The small and emerging venture to be assisted must have less than 50 new employees and less than \$1 million in gross annual revenues. Contact the USDA for detailed information by calling 501-301-3280 or visiting www.rurdev.usda.gov/ar.

- Surplus Property

Federal Surplus Property (FSP), an agency in the Department of Workforce Education, is a valuable resource for eligible participants to acquire surplus federal property. Organizations eligible include public agencies, private non-profit health and educational institutions, and shelters for the homeless. FSP property is property that has been declared surplus or excess by the Federal Government. The agency obtains the property and then "donates" it to program participants. As FSP is self-supporting and receives no state or federal funding, fees are assessed on property donated to cover expenses. The cost is generally extremely low. Inventory in the FSP warehouse includes a wide range of items from hand tools, office furniture and medical

supplies to trucks, generators, and compressors. Contact the State of Arkansas Surplus Property agency by calling 501-835-3111 or go to their website at dwe.arkansas.gov/FSP.htm.

- Diabetes Education

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the Arkansas Department of Health are teaming up to fight Diabetes in rural Arkansas. While diabetes is one of the most prevalent and expensive diseases in Arkansas, many rural health care professionals are without education of self management for their patients. With the Diabetes Review Course, colleges at UAMS join together and offer a continuing education program in diabetes to rural healthcare providers. Participants are also welcome to view the seminars at teleconference sites outside of Little Rock. With their new expertise, rural healthcare providers are able to educate patients on diabetes management. This education will work to combat the growing number of Arkansans with diabetes. To learn more about this program contact Kristen Allen at the Department of Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Programs at 501-664-2964.



Pictures from the 2004 Rural Development Conference May 26-28th at Eureka Springs



DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SERVICES

101 E. Capitol, Ste. 202
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: 888-787-2527
Fax: 501-682-6014

PRSRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Little Rock, AR
Permit No. 1270

DRS Staff

Bruce Campbell
Director
bruce.campbell@arkansas.gov

Amy Gunnett
Assistant Director
amy.gunnett@arkansas.gov

Lucy Farris
Grants Coordinator
lucy.farris@arkansas.gov

Stephanie Pistole
Grants Coordinator
stephanie.pistole@arkansas.gov

Lauren Smith
Administrative Assistant
ruralar@arkansas.gov

“Striving to Enhance the Quality of Life in Rural Arkansas”

Nortel Networks Connects with Communities

Unfortunately, natural disasters do occasionally strike in Arkansas. They come in the way of floods, fires, and tornadoes, just to name a few. When they occur, homes and businesses are destroyed, people lose their jobs, the injured need care, and members of the community are left with absolutely nothing. Nortel Networks, a company focused on networking and communication services, can help.

Nortel is able to set up a disaster call center with ease and little time. Director at the Nashville Area of the American Red Cross, Eric Rhinehardt, said that the call center system was “easy enough for a fundraiser to use”. This is only one part of what Nortel Networks is enabling businesses and agencies to achieve.

Regional teams work with community groups to develop programs addressed specifically to their needs. Nortel Networks can focus on math, science and technology education, as well as health-care and human services issues. Nortel Network associates take a look at the current structure of a business and then work to make it more efficient and cost effective.

Leisa Snyder is the Nortel Networks Account Manager for Arkansas and all local and state government. “We are here in Arkansas and proud to be doing business here,” says Snyder. “We are reaching out and trying to get a lot more active in the smaller communities.”

For additional information about Nortel Networks visit www.nortelnetworks.com.



Don't
Forget...

Rural Community Grant Program

Cycle II: December 17, 2004

Cycle III: March 25, 2005

Rural Services Block Grant Program

FY05: December 17, 2004

In order to be eligible for any future grants, you **MUST** close out any active grants for your community. Please contact our office at 1-888-787-2527 if you have any questions about closing your grant.